

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

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INFO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA
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S E C R E T CAIRO 20222

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PEPR, EG, SO, MASS, ET,KE
SUBJECT: EGYPTIAN RESPONSE TO U.S. APPROACH ON SOMALIA'S
- IMPROVEMENT OF RELATIONS WITH ITS NEIGHBORS

REF: STATE 219910

SUMMARY: MFA MINSTATE GHALI DOES NOT BELIEVE U.S. RES-
PONSE TO SIAD WILL PERSUADE HIM TO TAKE STEPS WHICH RUN
COMPLETELY COUNTER TO SOMALI'S HISTORIC OBJECTIVES.
GHALI THINKS OUR APPROACH IS UNREALISTIC AND TOO
LEGALISTIC. END SUMMARY.

1. CHARGE ACCOMPANIED BY POLOFF BRIEFED EGYPTIAN MINISTER
OF STATE MFA DR. BOUTROS BOUTROS GHALI ON THE U.S.
RESPONSE TO PRESIDENT SIAD'S MESSAGE PER REFTTEL ON
AUGUST 31. GHALI, WHO IS A SCHOLAR AND AFRICAN EXPERT
IN HIS OWN RIGHT, LISTENED ATTENTIVELY TO CHARGE'S
PRESENTATION OF THE TALKING POINTS AND ASKED IF HE COULD
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HAVE COPY BEFORE HE RESPONDED ORALLY. CHARGE EXPLAINED
THAT WE WANTED GOE TO HEAR OF UNDER SECRETARY NEWSOM'S
MEETING WITH AMB. ADDOU DIRECTLY FROM US.

2. GHALI'S RESPONSE WAS THAT THE U.S. APPROACH WOULD
ADD "DIPLOMATIC DEFEAT TO SOMALIA'S MILITARY DEFEAT," AND
WOULD BE A "HUMILIATION." HE STRESSED THIS SEVERAL TIMES

THROUGHOUT THE COURSE OF THE CONVERSATION, AND SAID SOMALI PRESIDENT SIAD COULD NOT GIVE UP ALL PAST SOMALI TERRITORIAL ASPIRATIONS, THOUGH HE MIGHT CONTINUE TO WORK TO REALIZE THEM THROUGH PEACEFUL, DIPLOMATIC MEANS. SAID SIAD COULD NOT SIGN A TREATY OF NON-AGGRESSION WITH KENYA OR ISSUE A DECLARATION GIVING UP OTHER SOMALI TERRITORIAL CLAIMS. HE CITED, AS AN EXAMPLE, THAT THE ONLY OTHER SOMALI LEADER WHO HAD DONE SOMETHING SIMILAR IN THE PAST CONSEQUENTLY LOST HIS POSITION WITHIN A FEW MONTHS. GHALI DESCRIBED THE U.S. APPROACH AS "LEGALISTIC" ONE WHOSE RESULTS COULD BE RENOUNCED WITHIN A FEW MONTHS BY A NEW SOMALI REGIME. POINTING OUT HE HAD A PERSONAL FRIENDSHIP WITH PRESIDENT SIAD AND HIS BROTHER FOREIGN MINISTER JAMA BARRE, HE SAID IT IS "PRACTICALLY IMPOSSIBLE" FOR SIAD TO ACCEPT THE U.S. APPROACH. HE DISMISSED AMBASSADOR ADDOU'S CALM RECEPTION OF THE U.S. APPROACH AS "AMBASSADORIAL MECHANICS," NOT A TRUE REFLECTION OF HOW SIAD WOULD RECEIVE IT.

3. RESPONDING TO CHARGE'S QUERY AS TO WHAT APPROACH THE U.S. SHOULD ADOPT, GHALI SUGGESTED THAT THE U.S. OFFER ECONOMIC AID WITHOUT PRECONDITIONS. HE DESCRIBED SOMALI AS A VERY POOR COUNTRY WHICH HAS JUST UNDERGONE A MILITARY DEFEAT, AND THE BEST COURSE FOR IT IN THE LONG RUN, ALBEIT A SLOW ONE, WAS THROUGH ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT. CHARGE POINTED OUT THAT U.S. CONGRESS WOULD LIKELY BE RELUCTANT TO PROVIDE SUCH ECONOMIC AID; GHALI ANSWERED
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"EXPLAIN TO CONGRESS THAT AFTER ALL THE U.S. HAS PROVIDED AID TO SOMALIA BEFORE." AS AN ALTERNATIVE, ECONOMIC AID COULD PERHAPS BE PROVIDED IN A MULTILATERAL FORMAT SUCH AS THE UNDP OR THROUGH OTHER INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS.

4. GHALI DESCRIBED EGYPTIAN POLICY AS BEING DIRECTED TOWARD PROVIDING A "KIND OF EQUILIBRIUM" BETWEEN SOMALIA AND ETHIOPIA; I.E., AS THE ROLE OF CONCILIATOR IN A SITUATION WHERE THERE NOW EXISTS DISEQUILIBRIUM. HE STRESSED THAT AN ETHIOPIAN MILITARY VICTORY IN ERITREA WOULD FURTHER ADD TO THIS STATE OF DISEQUILIBRIUM. EGYPT WILL BE SENDING A DELEGATION TO ETHIOPIA FOR THE CELEBRATION OF ETHIOPIAN ARMED FORCES REVOLUTION DAY ON SEPTEMBER 12. HE HAD PROMISED ETHIOPIAN FOREIGN MINISTER HE WOULD GO HIMSELF, BUT NOW CANNOT BECAUSE OF HIS ATTENDANCE AT CAMP DAVID.

5. COMMENT: GHALI'S RESPONSE, DELIVERED IN CALM PROFESSORIAL TONES, CAN BE SUMMED UP IN HIS STATEMENT THAT HE IS NOT PESSIMISTIC ABOUT THE SITUATION IN THE AREA, BUT THAT THE LEGALISTIC U.S. APPROACH WAS NOT THE RIGHT ONE. HIS RESPONSE WAS NOT UNEXPECTED GIVEN HIS PAST VIEWS ON THE SUBJECT. MATTHEWS

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